



The HPD News

Vol. 2, Number 6

www.houstonpolicedepartment.com

July 2002

Houston and Harris County Prepare for National Night Out

The significance of National Night Out 2002 has an even greater impact on citizens this year following the tragedies of Tropical Storm Allison and September 11th. Those events alone emphasize the importance of knowing who your neighbors are and how you can help reduce crime in your community.

On Friday, August 2, 2002, the kickoff for Houston/Harris County National Night Out will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park. A news conference and crime prevention fair will highlight the continuing need for citizens and law enforcement personnel to work closely with each other to keep crime at a minimum throughout Houston and Harris County.

Mayor Lee P. Brown, Chief of Police C.O. Bradford, Harris County Sheriff Tommy Thomas, and METRO Police Chief Tom Lambert will join Houston City Council members and other dignitaries to launch National Night Out 2002.

Organizers of this year's National Night Out kickoff chose the Miller Outdoor Theatre and Hermann Park in an effort to reach out to the residents of those area neighborhoods and the Texas Medical Center who were so dramatically impacted by Tropical Storm Allison in June 2001.

For more information about National Night Out 2002, call (713) 308-3200.



Houston residents check out an HPD helicopter at one of last year's National Night Out events.

HPD's Positive Interaction Program Celebrates 20 Years

The Houston Police Department's Positive Interaction Program (P.I.P.) turns 20 this year. The program began with the idea that citizens need to know more about their police department before a crime happens in their neighborhood. For some citizens, the only time they interacted with the police was when they needed them in an emergency. Through the neighborhood P.I.P., citizens can rely on the department to help address their community's concerns and needs.

"You get to know the officers and the officers get to know the community," said Jerry Koudelka of the Inwood Forest subdivision. Mr. Koudelka and other P.I.P. participants in the North Patrol area meet every third Tuesday of each month. "I think P.I.P. is very important to a lot of people in the community," said Mr. Koudelka. "One of the things I'm going to bring up at the next meeting is what do we need to look for since 9-11?"

A Spanish-speaking P.I.P. program was recently started by the Northline Park Storefront and the neighborhood has reacted positively to it with an average of 50 citizens attending each meeting. "HPD made the move in starting this," said Lieutenant Fred Guidry (North Patrol). "Because of language barriers, a lot of people were not coming to the meetings." The Spanish-speaking P.I.P. meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at different locations throughout the community.

For more information about the department's Positive Interaction Program, contact Officer David Acres (Citywide P.I.P. Coordinator) at (713) 308-9079.

Chief's Column

On Monday, May 13, 2002, the Traffic Enforcement Division of the Houston Police Department began operations. The division's mission is to respond to all aspects of traffic safety from an enforcement perspective to curtail unsafe and illegal driving practices. The Traffic Enforcement Division will be responsive to concerns about traffic issues affecting our way of life.

The newest division within the department is under the supervision of Acting Captain S. L. Broze. Five sergeants

and thirty officers all volunteered to work in the new division. The officers are assigned to squads that are directed by a sergeant. These squads will be given assignments throughout the city. The officers will be clearly visible in marked patrol cars with the wording "Traffic Enforcement Division" on the rear window.

The division's hours of operation are from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Friday, but those hours can be adjusted according to the needs of the city.

The Traffic Enforcement

Division is located in the Communications Building at 61 Riesner Street. The main telephone number is (713) 247-5900.



**Chief of Police
C.O. "Brad"
Bradford**

I encourage all HPD personnel and citizens to assist the officers assigned to the Traffic Enforcement Division by forming a partnership with them to ensure traffic safety and a better quality of life for all Houstonians and visitors to our city.

Construction Affects 1200 Travis Workers

Street construction is continuing in downtown Houston and will soon dramatically affect Houston Police Department employees who work at 1200 Travis.

Beginning June 24, 2002, and ending January 23, 2003, construction will take place on Milam Street from Commerce to Pierce as part of a Midtown Transit Street Project.

Learn how to navigate around all these street improvements on the web at www.downtownstreets.com. There are maps and graphs that will help you plan a safe and quick route in, out, and around downtown Houston.

Beyond the Language Barrier

Citizens within Houston's Vietnamese community are learning more about the Houston Police Department and its efforts to reduce crime each week through a one-hour radio talk show hosted by two Houston police officers. The program called *Radio Saigon Houston* can be heard on KREH-AM 900 each Tuesday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Officers Thong Nguyen and Vuong Nguyen are both assigned to the Traffic and Accident Division. The radio station donates free airtime to the department for the program.

Radio Saigon Houston began in 1992 under the coordination of Dr. Tim Dang (Community Outreach Division) with officers educating Vietnamese immigrants about how American police operate. "Prior to the show, the Vietnamese community was hesitant about contacting the police when crimes occurred," said Dr. Dang. "We also discovered that the most common problem for our community was the lack of knowledge regarding common traffic laws. Through the program, it has not only educated us but it has greatly improved the relationship between our community and HPD," said Dr. Dang.

KREH-AM 900 and *Radio Saigon Houston* were the recipients of the department's National Police Week Media Award for their continuing efforts to work with HPD. For more information about the weekly radio program, contact Dr. Tim Dang at (713) 308-9109.

Eight-Day Journey To Arrest A Killer Disease

Sixteen HPD employees will travel 2,400 miles to Ottawa, Canada, in eight days to raise money on behalf of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society ... and they are riding their bicycles all the way!

Eight other riders will accompany members of the HPD Bicycle Relay Team on their northern trek from July 10th through July 17th. This is the 21st year the team has pedaled a long distance to help bring a cure for leukemia, lymphoma, and blood-related cancers. Since their efforts began, officers have raised more than \$2.7 million through sponsorships. Leukemia is the number one child-killing disease, but ten times as many adults are stricken with it.

Each rider will wear a 'dog tag' in remembrance of someone who lost his or her life to a blood-related cancer. "I'll have six of those tags around my neck to remind me why I'm out pedaling in the middle of the night," said Captain Mark Curran (Bush-IAH Airport), chairman of the Bike Relay Team. "It truly is a labor of love," he said.

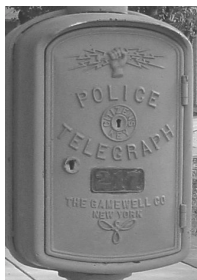
The team hopes to meet Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. In the past they have visited the White House and met with former President George Bush, whose three-year old daughter Robin contracted leukemia in 1953.

Other members of the relay team include Captain Richard Haun; deputy administrators Richard Pfeil, Jr. and Wesley Sheldon; Sergeants Stephen Morrison, Dianne Young-Murray, Jose Saldivar, and Michael Walsh, and Officers James Koteras, Joe Shockley, Francis DeVita, Roy McDonald, Michael Wisnoskie, David Johnson, and Chris Richie. Also making the trip is Forensic Photographer Supervisor Tom Bradshaw and Houston Fire Department paramedic Bob Villareal, who is making the journey for the 21st year.



Members of the HPD Bike Relay Team are preparing to embark on a group ride to Canada in efforts to raise money and awareness for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

This Month In HPD History: July



The Gamewell System used by officers in the 1930s to contact headquarters.

On July 1, 1915, an entire article of the Houston Police Manual of Rules and Regulations was dedicated to what an officer would do if he found money while on the job. Article 34 stated that "whenever (an officer) shall find on the streets or elsewhere a sum of money amounting to three dollars or more, that officer must advertise such finding in a daily paper of the City of Houston for three consecutive days." After that, if the rightful owner did not claim the cash, the officer could apply for permission to keep it.

According to Article 35, a condition of employment as a police officer was that he reside within the city limits "and shall not leave the city at any time without permission." Officers also had to post a bond since the city was not yet self-insured.

Article 59 required officers to check in using the Gamewell System every hour. These were communication systems inside blue call boxes strategically placed on posts throughout the city that allowed officers to report their locations and activities. Radio patrol operations did not begin until July 1, 1933, with scout cars patrolling neighborhoods and responding to calls for service that were dispatched through radio station KGZB. Prior to that date, officers had to wait until they checked in through the Gamewell System to find out about the calls for service that were waiting.

Officer Whistles: Serious About Education



Officer Deanie Harmon as Officer Whistles shown here with Officer Alvin Steelman and Rudy the Robot.

Officer Deanie Harmon (Community Services) laughs on the job a lot. In fact, she is expected to bring humor to her audience in her role as Officer Whistles. A 22-year HPD veteran with 17 years formerly in the Narcotics Division, Officer Harmon conceived the idea of Officer Whistles from a personal interest in child safety and clowning. She enrolled in a professional clown school where she learned how to produce a skit, create a character, and incorporate educational themes into her programs. “It is actually an art,” said Officer Harmon.

Officer Whistles began in 2000 and is considered an educational tool of the Community Services Division. Officer Whistles is assisted by Rudy the Robot and Officer Alvin Steelman, who is dressed in a full HPD uniform during the programs. Officer Whistles is a first for a Houston area law enforcement agency, as similar programs were previously found only within fire departments. Last year, Officer Whistles went to 80 Houston Independent School District schools and reached more than 20,000 children with a message of safety and awareness.

The themes of Officer Whistles’ skits range from dealing with peer pressure to how to react when someone finds a gun. Officer Whistles asks, “When you see a gun, what do you do?” That is when enthusiastic children respond with “Run!” Officer Whistles says, “If the message saves just one child, it will all be worth it.”

Burglar-Proof Your Home Before Summer Vacation

Here are some suggestions from the Houston Police Department for burglar-proofing your home before you leave on your summer vacation:

- Ask a trusted friend or neighbor to watch your house while you are away, and leave a phone number or address where you can be reached in case of an emergency.
- Have a neighbor or friend pick up your newspapers or contact the subscription office to have it put on hold until you return. Also contact the post office to hold your mail.
- Give your home a lived-in look by having someone mow the yard.
- Use timers to turn lights off and on at appropriate times of the day and night.
- Turn the bell on your telephone to low so that people outside cannot hear it.
- Put garbage cans away in a storage shed or garage. Empty garbage cans can sometimes be a giveaway that someone is not home.
- Close and lock all windows in the house as well as the garage door.
- Have a neighbor occasionally park his or her car in your garage or driveway.